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# MI AmeriCorps

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Contact us at: [miamericorpscouncil@yahoogroups.com](mailto:miamericorpscouncil@yahoogroups.com)



## Experiences Through the Eyes of an AmeriCorps Member

Belinda Weber, AmeriCorps-Success By Six



AmeriCorps has been an amazing adventure of  
Making a difference in our community and  
“getting things done”. To

Every child we have taught that through  
Respect for ourselves and community we can  
reach the stars. We

Inspire hope and a thirst for knowledge that  
knows no bounds

Conquering our boundaries that limited us.  
Wanting more but afraid of failure.

Only to succeed in all our endeavors.

Remembering where we started and imagining  
how far we can go.

Pushing ourselves to be the best that we can be.

Such is our life as an **AMERICORPS** Member.

Proud of our accomplishments set free by service.



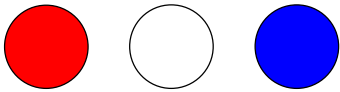
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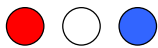




## City Year Detroit Spring Camps! Alana Hall, City Year Detroit



*Judges say a perfect 10... for City Year Spring Camps!*



*"...campers painted a mural and then donated it..."*

City Year is a national organization that engages 17-24 year olds in full-time community service. Corps members serve on diverse teams, tutoring, mentoring and running after school programs for elementary, middle and high school students in the Detroit Metropolitan area. We are in our schools Monday through Thursday. Fridays are set aside for either leadership development or transformative service projects with partnering community organizations.

In the spring we hold City Year Spring Camps, during the week of Detroit Public Schools Spring Break. Last year we enrolled 300 elementary students (2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders) in Spring Camps at two different Boys and Girls Clubs in the city. This year, Spring Camps have expanded to accommodate 400 students at three different Boys and Girls Clubs.

This year's theme was "Journey of the Rings: Explorations of the Globe". The symbol that was chosen to illustrate the theme is the Olympic Rings. The Spring Camps staff chose them because the Olympics symbolize a peaceful planet. Since the Olympics are the coming together of all seven continents in a peaceful manner to exhibit talent from each one, we felt that it was a good example for

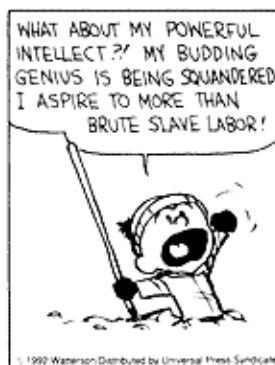
our students. Breakfast and lunch was provided for campers every day and they had a full week of multicultural activities.

Each day of the week, a different continent was featured. Some of the many activities included the Parade of Dragons on Asia Day, an African Treasure Hunt on Africa Day, an Australian Field Day, and puppet making and juggling on Europe Day. All of these activities were hands-on for the children, but there were also presentations and games from different cultures. Friday brought an end of the week celebration—on America Day. Starting with a parade across the University of Detroit Mercy's (UDM) campus, students from all three camp sites came together to share in fun and service. One of the most exciting events of the week was the service component, in which campers painted a mural and then donated it to UDM's Leadership Development Institute.

Camps are an exciting and inspiring week planned and facilitated completely by Corps members, and students had a wonderful time.

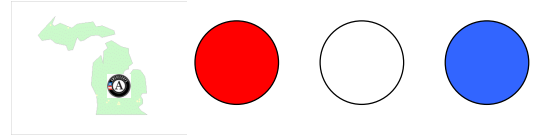
*City Year Detroit is currently recruiting a diverse corps of highly motivated, idealistic young adults, ages 17-24 but spaces are limited. For applications or more information, call 313-874-6825 or visit our website at [www.cityyear.org](http://www.cityyear.org).*

**In regard to Service? ☺**



## Sexual Assault Awareness Month Educates Many

Kari Tanney, AmeriCorps Victim Services



The AmeriCorps Victims Services members based at the Underground Railroad in Saginaw have been busy with a variety of projects this year. Sexual Assault Awareness Month is every April, and it is one of their busiest months. Throughout the month, members held activities and events to educate Saginaw residents on sexual assault facts.

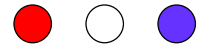
Sexual assault statistics in the United States are alarming: 1.3 women are raped every minute. This means that 78 rapes take place every hour in our country. In Michigan 5,466 rapes were reported in 1996. Since approximately only 26% of rapes are reported, this is an even more disturbing figure.

Saginaw recently ranked as the 3<sup>rd</sup> most violent city in Michigan and 25<sup>th</sup> most violent in the United States. Sexual assaults in Saginaw increased 33% in 1999. By addressing these issues, members at AmeriCorps Victims Services provide a vital service to Saginaw. The events and activities that we coordinate educate the community and make them more aware of what is going on.

One of the events that took place April 1-7 was *The Dinner Table*, held at Saginaw Valley State University. *The Dinner Table* brings to light the reality of sexual assault and how it affects entire families. Members also worked at an informational booth at Saginaw Valley State University during the second week of April.

Along with educating the general public, members also conduct youth education programs that help people avoid becoming victims of sexual assault, and know where to seek help if they do become victims.

*"Sexual assault statistics in the United States are alarming"*



## The Concerned Take Action

Dave Mossburger, Creston City Wide Action Corps

On Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 60 concerned parents and community activists gathered together at Creston High School to discuss the fate of the Grand Rapids Public School system. On the agenda was the question of how to build a vibrant, dynamic system that allows all children to succeed amidst the district's recent budget problems and proposed school closings.

This convention was organized by the Creston City Wide Action Corps and the Coalition for Community Involvement in Schools. It attracted people from all four quadrants of the city, representing elementary, secondary, and specialty schools.

The result was a 7-part "Parent Platform on Education." This platform outlined action steps that the district needed to undertake, with parent and community support, to reform the district. Specifically, the platform called for increased parent involvement in schools, decentralized control, and an emphasis on the belief that "every child can succeed."

The platform is a reflection of a national movement of urban school reform that has proven successful in Chicago, Milwaukee, Seattle, and other cities. It represents a systematic plan that will create positive changes to the ongoing problems that has confronted both parents and school administrators. The platform was presented in April for implementation next year.



*"set high expectations... every child can succeed"*



### Member Council Newsletter Staff

**Andrew W. Grosvenor**, Editor  
Marquette-Alger RESA AmeriCorps  
[awgrosvenor@yahoo.com](mailto:awgrosvenor@yahoo.com)

### Michigan Community Service Commission

1048 Pierpont, Suite 4  
Lansing, Michigan 48913



### MCSC Staff

**Kyle Caldwell**, Executive Director  
**Paula Kaiser**, Deputy Director  
**Michael Freeman**, Program Officer  
**Kimberlee Andrews**, Program Officer  
**Andy Younger**, Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator

Phone: (517) 335-4295

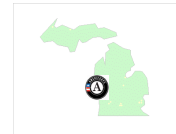
**We're on the Web!**

See us at:

**[www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)**

## Michigan Communities In Schools

by Veronika Spykerman, Michigan Communities In Schools



Michigan Communities in Schools (CIS) links community resources with schools, delivering needed services to students and their families. Our mission is to champion the connection of needed community resources with schools to help young people successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life. We do this by fulfilling the 5 CIS basics:

- a personal one-on-one relationship with a caring adult
- a safe place to learn and grow
- a healthy start and a healthy future
- a marketable skill to use upon graduation
- a chance to give back to peers and community.

We have 10 full time and 15 part time AmeriCorps members. They are located in the Ottawa, Kalamazoo, Lenawee, Tecumseh and Mancelona communities. We work in 30 schools and tutor about 2,000 students. We work in 22 after-school programs with

about 800 students.

Some of the other areas our AmeriCorps members are involved in are:

- planning service projects e.g. America Goes Back to School, Family Forum, etc.
- working with other AmeriCorps sites to develop partnerships - cooperation with Habitat for Humanity
- coaching Girls on the Run - self esteem and running program for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls
- being counselors for the Leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- helping with PAT play groups
- volunteering at local elementary school's projects - Fun Nights, Carnivals and Book Fairs
- and much, much more.

If you are interested in volunteering or if you would like to work together on a service project, please contact MariEllyn McLeod at (616) 396-7566 ext. 119.

## MARESA AmeriCorps Goes Mad!

By Kim Nixon Thomas, Marquette-Alger RESA AmeriCorps



Marquette-Alger Regional Educational Service Agency (MARESA) AmeriCorps members took part in March Madness, an annual Girl Scouts of America (GSA) event. Upper Peninsula Girl Scouts gathered to spend the weekend "locked-in" at a local high school. The Liberty Children's Art Project (LCAP) offered art classes as part of the experience. Scouts signed up for workshops where they could explore Mosaics, Silk Painting, Watercolors, Paper Marbling, Cartooning, or design a Sculpture switch plate for their bedroom.

LCAP has been involved in the GSA March Madness event for three years. Marilyn Mutch, LCAP executive director, believes that art is very therapeutic for children and the process helps to integrate the mind, while at the same time develop motor and decision-making skills, and a positive self-concept.

since 2000 when Jay Laursen first came on as Mutch's apprentice. This year, AmeriCorps members Matt Hayes and Sheri Aldridge ran workshops while Andrew Grosvenor, Elisha Colson, Amanda Erspamer, Liz Portelli, and Kim Nixon Thomas lent a helping hand. The madness is always powerful at the GSA event; AmeriCorps members served 320 students, in 14 art classes.

Started with a grant from the Kellogg Foundation, LCAP has been in operation for nearly nine years. They provide art classes to the youth of Marquette County at reduced rates and offer scholarships to students who show economic need. LCAP offers enrichment programs to elementary schools in Ishpeming, Negaunee, K.I. Sawyer, and Gwinn. Classes are offered at the LCAP studio all day throughout the summer.

LCAP has partnered with AmeriCorps